

Based upon a publication written by Faye Henson for the Chamber of Commerce.



The Amish came to Lawrence County in January of 1944 from Mississippi. The first three families to come here were Dan Yader, Joe Yoder, and Joseph Gingerich. They were looking for another place to settle when they heard that the First National Bank in Lawrenceburg had some land to sell. The land was located west of Three Oaks known as the "Old Convent Place" and Emmitt Richardson helped them in securing the land.

Andy Yoder came to Lawrenceburg in a railroad car loaded with horses, farm machinery and household furnishings. This caused quite a stir with local people. Emmanuel Gingerich and his family followed in the fall of 1914 and made arrangements to stay in a cabin at Ollie E Wright's place.



Miss Maucle Gowen directed them to "Old Convent Place" when they got off the bus and told them they sure had come to a poor land. Enos Gingerich, Emmanuel's son recalls that he was feeling low after seeing the place and hearing her remarks.

The Amish believe the greatest wisdom is to despise the world and love God. Any form of worldliness is sinful such as dress, education, office holding to pursue honors or high dignity. To provide adequate sustenance for the family is necessary but luxuries and lustful appetites are harmful to the soul. Three great great values are cherished by the Amish: (1) a devout religion (2) a love of the land (3) close knit family and community. They do not believe in taking oaths or bearing arms, but follow the peaceful examples of Christ in all things. They have been persecuted for these beliefs and are willing to be persecuted again.

The Amish derive their livelihood from growing crops such as corn, pepper, wheat, oats, hay, tobacco, peanuts and popcorn. They also sell fresh vegetables, milk, sorghum molasses, baskets, quilts, rugs, hats, and furniture. They cane chairs as well as slaughter hogs and cows. They have their own sawmills and buggy and wagon makers in their community.



There are five Amish schools in this district. Children learn English when starting to school. They go to school until they finish the 8th grade or until 14 years of age, whichever comes first. The children study reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling and speak three languages: English, Pennsylvania Dutch and some German.

The women wear black, dark blue, green or brown dresses with black aprons for everyday and white for Sunday. Teenage girls wear black caps until they marry. Men wear no collars, barn door britches, felt hats for winter and straw for summer (handmade). Buttons are used on men's shirts, trousers and underwear, but only hook and eyes on coats and vests.

Sunday night singings are where the young people "court." They call it running around. On the day of a wedding, church service begins in the morning and ends at noon. Banns (the public announcement in a church that a marriage is going to take place between two specified persons) are said a week or two before the wedding in the church. The bride's parents furnish the food at their home, which is a big event. The couple spend their first night at the bride's home. Their honeymoon consists of visits with aunts and uncles.

When the Amish dies, the body is kept in the home. Embalming is required by the state. They use no make-up on their people. They are put in a pine box and buried in the Amish cemetery. They do have concrete markers.

There are approximately 100 families in the Lawrence County area with an average of 5-7 members per household and they are excellent neighbors. They prefer to associate with their own people and ask only to be left alone to worship and live their beliefs.

They have greatly improved the land in the Lawrence County area with lots of manure, lime, fertilizer and rotation of crops. Care is taken to prevent soil erosion. All of their farming is done with horses and without the aid of tractors or modern equipment. No electricity is used. They have been living this way for over 300 years. As to how much longer they can resist technology and change, only time will tell.

Please, if you visit in their community, do not take pictures. They do not believe in this and in so doing you are infringing on their religious beliefs.

